The Council of Jews Urap

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THE DEMANDS OF JESUS' WAY.

Jn. 14:6 I am the real and living Way.

INTRO. The word, "Way" in the Bible. 750 times, literally and figuratively.

The purpose of God, foretold by prophets and fulfilled in X, is described as "The Way of the Lord," the Way of Peace, the Way of Truth, the Way of Salvation.

X himself is, or has opened up, the way of man to God and accordingly the Xn religion is spoken of in the N.T. and early writings as the "Way", which leads to life, peace and happiness.

The first followers of Jesus had no highly developed ecclesiastical procedure or systems of belief such as we have today. Their idea of the "Way" was personal loyalty to Jesus Christ and imitation of him according to his life, works and teachings.

Jesus himself formulated no philosophy of life, developed no system of belief nor founded a new order of church government. His life and conduct was mainly a mode of procedure, a way of living day by day, in true accord with God, his Heavenly Father. Following his mode of procedure, or walking in his way, constituted discipleship to him.

As a Way of Living, Jesus makes certain requirements of all who would follow him.

I. Jesus demands that his followers accept his God.

1. Nearly everyone believes in God, it is easier to believe than not to believe. Creative Intelligence or Master Mind, Supreme Architect of the Universe. Not likely that creation happened just by chance.

2. But to believe in God as Jesus did, as a Heavenly Father who knows and loves and cares requires a faith and courage of the heroic type. It is not easy to believe that God revealed himself in the life and ministry of Jesus who in the end suffered the death of a malefactor, and at that of his own choosing, and to follow out all the implications of such an expression of divine love. Such a belief seemingly does not harmonize with the facts of life- disappointments and hardships and sufferings, injustice and disaster.

If God so loved us why do we suffer? Always the cry from the Cross rings in our ears, "My God, why?"

3. "Show us the Father" is a fundamental question for all time. What is God like? Where is he? How shall we think of him?

And the answer that Jesus gave to Phillip is still the most satisfying one, it is great in its significance "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Phillip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" We know God only thru his creations. Every created thing reveals God. In man, the highest form of created intelligence, God reveals himself in fullest measure. In Jesus Christ, the one perfect moral and spiritual being, we get our most complete, reliable and satisfying understanding of God. In Jesus, God, is our Heavenly Father who lives and loves and cares for each and every one of us.

Weatherhead

4. Leslie D. Weatherhead of City Temple, London, spoke as follows from the depths of his soul:

"So, when I see him nailed to a cross and yet looking up into the face of God and calling God "Father", I find myself saying over and over again that there are things I cannot understand, there are things which would seem to contradict the loving nature of God; but if Jesus said that God is a Father, and if Jesus can leave his life in the Father's hands, and be certain, by faith, that all will work out well in the end, I can leave my life to him, and I can commit to his capable hands the lives of others, and get them, even in the hour of darkness, to hold on in the dark. The faith of Jesus in God is the lamp which I press to my breast, and its light never goes out.....for the God who, on Easter morning, vindicated the faith of Jesus will vindicate those who bet their lives, and risk everything for the belief that he is what Jesus said he was, even tho they found what Jesus found, that Gethesemane and Calvary lie between."

5. This is not mere theory- it works! One instance out of the school of hard experience.

The brilliant and promising youth in a debout Xn home- killed in a railway accident. The stricken father rushes to the home of his pstor, rushes into the house and study, siezes the minister rough-ly by the shoulder and cries, "Where was God when my son was killed?"

"God was just where he was when his own son died."

3. Only a belief in Christ's God can give such assurance to a breaking heart. But it is not easy, it takes courage so to believe, to call God "Father" in our Gethesemanes and on our crosses.

II. The Way of Jesus demands also that we forgive our enemies.

requirement

1. Another demand that is hard-too hard for most of us. It was hard for Peter who asked, "Lord, how often shall we forgive, seven times?"

2. Not long ago the newspapers printed front page headlines the story of a father's forgiveness, an Episcopal clergy man of a city in the south. His son had been murdered by his son's wife. The clergyman went to the prison cell and said to his daughter-in-law, heart-broken but calm, "I forgive you: my heart bleeds for you. In some way there may come ultimately some good out of what now seems altogether evil." When the reporters pressed him for an explanation, he replied, "Of course I forgive her; how could a Xn do otherwise?" One who truly follows the Christ could not do otherwise, but it is not easy. It takes courage to do it. And in the face of such forgiveness how petty and mean so many of our actions appear to be!

The man who stole 2 loaves of bread in San Jose.

3. This matter of forgiveness applies not only to individuals but to groups as well.

a- the prejudice, ill will and hatreds between denominational groups! Today there is a better understanding between them, but the scars and hurts of former days still remain, even as in the South we still find bitterness left from the Civil War days.

b- Capital and labor need to learn how to forgive one another- to forgive and forget.

Nations and races are also subject to this demand of Jesus Way for forgiveness. It applies to color and class as well. Instead of the drawn sword there must come the friendly handclasp, in place of bitter speech there must come words and deeds of sympathy and good will. Instead of unjust exploitation there must come co-operative enterprise. Utopian? Sounds like it, but since it works among individuals who have tried it, is it not common sense to apply it to groups as well?

We talk glibly about our Xn fundamentals- Forgiveness is the forgotten fundamental of the Way.

To forgive on Sundays and hate on week-days, to love only your class, your nation, your race, your creed, your religion and stop there with your loving and forgiving is to trifle with the practice and teachings of Jesus, is to utterly disregard the demands of His Way.

Of course there will always be differences of opinion and belief, what of it? Always there will be conservatives and liberals, literalists and mystics, but the way of Jesus requires that we exercise toleration, understanding, forgiveness- in short love and forbearance.

III. The Way of Jesus demands further of his followers that they put away selfishness. Selfishness is practically the root of all our troubles, whether in the home, in the church, in politics or in industry.

When the prodigal son wished to launch forth on his life of selfish pleasure, he said to his father, "Give me, give me, give me my money, my goods and property that will eventually come to me anyway. Give them to me now." But, after squandering all that his father gave him, after his selfish pleasures had reduced him to poverty, he came to himself and in his disallusioned and chastened heart he framed a new prayer-"Make me, make me, make me as a hired servant; make me anything but what I was."

Neither is this command that we put away personal selfishness an easy one to obey. Think of anyone who has rendered the world an outstanding service and you will find one who had to renounce himself in order to give himself to his career of service. Before a man can do anything worth while he has to give up himself to do it. Think of Jane Adams in her Hull House, Sir Grenfell in the Labradors, Kagawa in Japan, Schweitser in Africe, Muriel Lester in London, these all renounced themselves and sacrificed much in order to do what they believed God wanted them to do. Nor was it easy. It took heroic courage on their part. Their Xty was'nt a mere matter attending religious services, singing glory songs and participating in ritualistic exercises, as helpful as these are, but compliance to the Jesus Way of living.